

REMARKS

The indication in the outstanding Office Action that claims 13-16 are allowed is appreciated.

The outstanding Office Action includes a rejection of claims 9, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. In addition, the outstanding Office Action includes a rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,536,134 (*Hirooka*) and Japanese Patent Publication No. 11-269907. It is submitted that both rejections have been rendered moot by the above amendment. Accordingly, withdrawal of both rejections is requested.

It is pointed out that claims 1-9, 11, and 12 are canceled without prejudice to pursuing these claims in a continuing patent application.

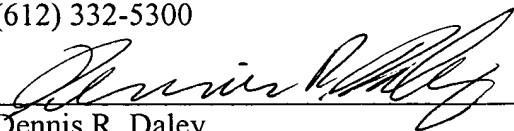
It is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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